

What is claimed is:

1. A system for remotely determining the contents of a mail receptacle comprising:

a machine-readable label programmed with at least one property of a piece of mail, said machine-readable label being incorporated into the piece of mail;

a machine-readable label reader for reading the machine-readable label;

a processor for receiving the at least one property of the piece of mail from the machine-readable label reader;

a memory for storing the at least one property of the piece of mail; and

a means for remotely accessing the memory to determine the contents of the mail receptacle.

2. The system of Claim 1, wherein said machine-readable label includes a radio transponder or transmitter.

3. The system of Claim 1, wherein the means for remotely accessing further comprises a telephony means, an internet means, a wireless means, or an email means.

4. The system of Claim 1, wherein the processor is programmable.

5. The system of Claim 4, wherein the processor is programmable to initiate the means for remotely accessing the memory to contact a user.

6. The system of Claim 5, wherein the processor initiates the means for remotely accessing the memory when the processor detects a piece of mail containing at least one property  
5 programmed by the user.

7. A method for notification of the contents of a mail receptacle comprising:

10 incorporating a machine-readable label into a piece of mail, said machine-readable label containing information about at least one property of the piece of mail;

15 receiving the information from the machine-readable label; storing the information from the machine-readable label; and communicating the information from the machine-readable

label to a user.

8. The method of Claim 7, further comprising the steps of programming a processor to initiate the communicating step when at least one property of a piece of mail is detected, and  
20 detecting the at least one property of a piece of mail.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the communicating step further comprises notifying the user that a piece of mail is within the mail receptacle when the at least one property of a piece of mail  
25 is detected in the detecting step.

10. A method for remotely determining the contents of a mail receptacle comprising:

incorporating a machine-readable label to a piece of mail,  
said machine-readable label containing information about at least  
5 one property of the piece of mail;

receiving the information from the machine-readable label;

storing the information from the machine-readable label; and

remotely accessing the information to determine the contents  
of the mail receptacle.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the remotely accessing step  
further comprises remotely accessing the stored information by  
telephony means, an internet means, a wireless means, or an email  
means.

12. A method of doing business comprising:

incorporating a machine-readable label to a piece of mail,  
said machine-readable label containing information about at least  
one property of the piece of mail;

receiving the information from the machine-readable label;

storing the information from the machine-readable label;

remotely accessing the information to determine the contents  
of the mail receptacle; and

affecting the sale of goods or services based on the  
25 information.